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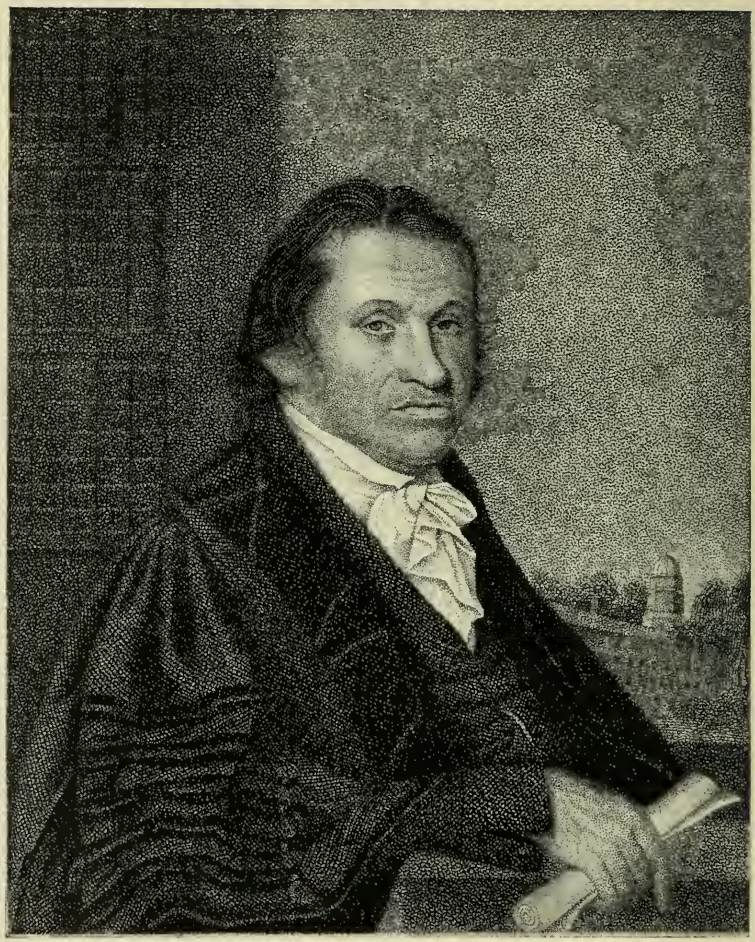

SAMUEL BARD, M.D., LL.D.

From "A Domestic Narrative of the Life of Samuel Bard, M.D., LL.D., late President of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of the University of the State of New York, &c." By Rev. John M'Vickar, A.M., Professor of Moral Philosophy and Rhetoric, Columbia College, New York. New York: Published at the Literary Rooms, corner of Broadway and Pine-Street. A Paul, Printer. 1822. King's College in the background.

Two Discourses

Dealing with

Medical Education in Early New York

By

SAMUEL BARD, M.D.

Professor of the Practice of Medicine in King's College
Later President of the College of Physicians
and Surgeons

New York
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS
1921

INTRODUCTION

At a time when Columbia University is undertaking a long step forward in the better organization of medical education and research, and when the Society of the New York Hospital is celebrating the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of its organization, it is appropriate that there should be reprinted for the information of this generation the prophetic "Discourse upon the Duties of a Physician; with some Sentiments upon the Usefulness and the Necessity of a Public Hospital," delivered before the President and Governors of King's College at the commencement held on May 16, 1769, by Dr. Samuel Bard, Professor of the Practice of Medicine in King's College, and also the discourse on medical education delivered at the medical commencement of the College of Physicians and Surgeons on April 6, 1819 when Dr. Bard was President of that College.

The story of Dr. Samuel Bard's life is told in an address by Dr. Henry William Ducachet delivered before the New York Historical Society, August 14, 1821, and reprinted at Philadelphia in October, 1821 from the fourth volume of the American Medical Recorder. Of Huguenot descent, Dr. Bard was born in Philadelphia on April 1, 1742 and in due time became the chief practitioner of medicine in the City and Province of New York.

The first of the two discourses now reprinted, was delivered in 1769 "as advice to those gentlemen who then received the first medical degrees" conferred by what is now Columbia University. These two addresses, and particularly the first address, speak for themselves. They establish Dr. Bard's leadership in medical education in America and justify his reputation as prophet and seer.

Dr. Bard lived to be seventy-nine years of age and died on May 25, 1821. Of the early years of King's College and Columbia College Dr. Bard was a chief ornament. He served not only as Professor of the Theory and Practice of Medicine, but later as Professor of Chemistry as well as of Natural Philosophy and Astronomy. From 1787 to 1804 he was a Trustee of the College.

NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER

March 1, 1921

I

A DISCOURSE UPON THE DUTIES OF A PHYSICIAN

Delivered before the President and Governors of King's College at the Commencement held on the 16th day of May, 1769.

II

A DISCOURSE ON MEDICAL EDUCATION

Delivered at the Medical Commencement of the College of Physicians and Surgeons on the 6th of April, 1819.

A

DISCOURSE

UPON THE

DUTIES OF A PHYSICIAN,

WITH SOME SENTIMENTS,

ON THE

USEFULNESS AND NECESSITY

OF A

PUBLIC HOSPITAL:

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

PRESIDENT AND GOVERNORS

OF

KING's COLLEGE,

AT THE COMMENCEMENT,

Held on the 16th of MAY, 1769.

As Advice to thoſe GENTLEMEN who then received the Firſt MEDICAL DEGREES conferred by that UNIVERSITY.

By SAMUEL BARD, M. D.
Profeſſor of the Practice of Medicine in KING's COLLEGE.

NEW-YORK:
Printed by A. & J. ROBERTSON, at the Corner of BEAVER-STREET, M,DCC,LXIX.

To His EXCELLENCY

SIR HENRY MOORE, Bart.

Captain General, and Governor in Chief, in and over the *Province* of NEW-YORK, and the Territories depending thereon, in *AMERICA*, Chancellor, and Vice-Admiral of the ſame.

SIR,

THE favourable Sentiments you were pleaſed to expreſs of the following Diſcourſe, when it was delivered, and the very generous Warmth with which your Excellency entered into the Propoſal it contains, of founding a Public Infirmary in this City, have emboldened the Author to ſubmit it to the Conſideration of the Public; and to inſure it a favourable Reception, he has ventured to prefix to it your Excellency's Name; not doubting but that the ſame Benevolence which prompted you ſo generouſly to undertake the Cauſe of the Poor and Un-

Unhappy, will now plead his Excuſe, for the Liberty he has taken of propoſing your Excellency's humane and benevolent Example, to the Imitation of his Fellow Citizens and Country Men.

May your Excellency, and every generous Contributor to this Inſtitution, enjoy the Happineſs of ſeeing the good Effects of your charitable Endeavours; and as the juſt Reward of your Humanity, may "*the Bleſſing of him that is ready to periſh come upon you.*"

In which Hope,
I have the Honor to be,
With the greateſt Reſpect.
Your Excellency's
Moſt obedient
Humble Servant,

SAMUEL BARD.

PREFACE.

THE Scheme of a Public Hoſpital for the Reception of the poor Sick of this Government and City, is a Subject, which for a long Time paſt, has employed the Attention of many charitable and benevolent Inhabitants; particularly of thoſe Gentlemen engaged in the practice of Phyſic, and Offices of Religion, whoſe Profeſſions afford them the moſt frequent Opportunities of knowing the great Neceſſity there is for ſuch an Inſtitution.

In particular, a Plan has often been propoſed, and the moſt proper Method for putting it in Execution conſidered, by a Set of Medical Gentlemen, who have formed themſelves into a Society for promoting the Knowledge, and extending the Uſefulneſs of their Profeſſion: and it has been a Reſolution entered upon the Minutes of that Society, from its firſt Inſtitution, that they ſhould Addreſs the Legiſlature upon that Subject, on the firſt favourable Opportunity.

It

It likewiſe has repeatedly been mentioned by the different Profeſſors of Medicine, (particularly Doctors Middleton, and Jones,) in their public Lectures, and earneſtly recommended to the Conſideration of the Inhabitants; the unhappy Diſputes however, in which we have lately been engaged with our Mother Country, have hitherto rendered their Endeavours fruitleſs; but, they nevertheleſs (convinced of the great Neceſſity there was for ſuch an Inſtitution, and the very great Advantages which all Orders of People muſt derive from it) reſolved to perſiſt in their Endeavours, until ſome happy Occaſion ſhould offer of puſhing it with ſome Probability of Succeſs. Such an Occaſion now preſents itſelf, and the Warmth and Zeal, which his Excellency the Governor, and moſt of his honorable Council, have expreſſed for it, and the Liberality, with which they have ſubſcribed towards it, induce them to think the preſent, the fitteſt Time, for recommending it, to the ſerious Conſideration of the Public.

And

And as an Inſtitution of this Nature, muſt neceſſarily be calculated for the Benefit of the diſtreſſed of all Sects and Perſuaſions whatſoever, it is hoped, that the generous and public ſpirited of every Denomination, will enter warmly into the Deſign, and promote it with that Zeal, which ſhould actuate the Breaſt of every Man, who thinks it his Duty to relieve the Neceſſities of his Fellow Creatures, or promote the Happineſs of Society

A DIS-

A

DISCOURSE

UPON THE

DUTIES OF A PHYSICIAN

Homines ad Deos, nulla re proprius accedunt, quam Salutem Hominibus dando. CICERO.

There is nothing by which a Man approaches nearer to the Perfections of the Deity, than by restoring the Sick, to the Enjoyment of the Bleſſings of Health.

THAT this Country has, ever ſince its Diſcovery and Settlement, laboured under the greateſt Diſadvantages, from the imperfect Manner, in which Students have been inſtructed in the Principles of Medicine; and from the Conſequent prevailing Ignorance of but too many of its Profeſſors; is a Truth which cannot be conteſted; and of which many unhappy Families have ſeverely felt the fatal Effects.

The preſent Occaſion therefore muſt give the moſt real Pleaſure to every conſiderate Man, or Lover of his Country; and ſurely there is no Friend of Learning, but muſt rejoice to ſee theſe Gentlemen, who have given the moſt public and ample Teſtimony of their Abilities, now ſoliciting the Honors of this Univerſity, in a Profeſſion hitherto (at leaſt in a regular Manner) uncultivated amongſt us.

I am therefore particularly happy in having this Opportunity of congratulating every public ſpirited Friend and Patron of this College, and eſpecially thoſe of the medical Inſtitution, upon the preſent Inſtance of its Succeſs, which affords ſo pleaſing a Proſpect of its riſing Reputation and future Utility.

But it is to you, Gentlemen, who are Candidates for medical Degrees, that I mean in a more particular Manner to addreſs my preſent Diſcourſe; receive then my Thanks for the Honors you have already reflected upon us, and as both for your Sakes and our own, I cannot but be anxious for your future Reputation;

tation; let me once more, before we part, requeſt your Attention for a few Moments, whilſt I endeavour to explain to you the weighty duties of your Profeſſion----A Profeſſion, in the Practice of which, Integrity and Abilities, will place you among the moſt uſeful; and Ignorance and Diſhoneſty, among the moſt pernicious Members of Society.

And be not alarmed, if I ſet out with telling you, that your Labours muſt have no End. No leſs than Life, and its greateſt Bleſſing Health, are to be the Objects of your Attention; and would you acquit yourſelves to your own Conſciences, you muſt ſpend *your* Days in aſſiduous Enquiries, after the Means of rendering thoſe of others long and happy.

Do not therefore imagine, that from this Time your Studies are to ceaſe; ſo far from it, you are to be conſidered as but juſt entering upon them; and unleſs your whole Lives, are one continued Series of Application and Improvement, you will fall ſhort of your Duty. For, if in the Eye of the Law, the Man who does not afford, to all immediately under his

Care

Care and Protection, as far as in him lies, the neceſſary Means of preſerving Life, is conſidered as acceſſary to Murder, how will that Phyſician excuſe himſelf to his own Conſcience, or what Palliation of his Guilt, will he plead at the awful Bar of eternal Juſtice, who inſtead of embracing and induſtriouſly cultivating every Opportunity of Improvement, ſhall (conſcious of his own Inability) raſhly tamper with the Lives of his Fellow Creatures; and, at the riſk of their Safety, defraud them of their Property? Would not any one conſider the Lawyer an Impoſtor, not to uſe a harſher Phraſe, who, conſcious of his own Ignorance, ſhould give Advice, which might endanger the Eſtate of another? And is not the Phyſician who impoſes Ignorance upon me for Knowledge, and puts my Life to the hazard of an uncertain die; ſo much the greater Impoſtor, in as much as my Life, is of greater Eſtimation than my Eſtate. In a Profeſſion then, like that you have embraced, where the Object is of ſo great Importance as the Life of a Man; you are accountable even for the Errors of Ignorance, unleſs you have embraced every Opportunity of obtaining Knowledge.

And

And to a Man, who has any Conſcience at all, it will be but a ſlight Alleviation of his Remorſe, to ſay, after ſome fatal Blunder, *I knew no better*! Unleſs he can likewiſe add, that it is to be attributed to the Frailty of his Nature, and not to the Negligence of his Diſpoſition, that he was not better informed. Nor will a weeping Parent receive much Conſolation from this Reflection, that by the fatal Ignorance of his Phyſician, and not by the malignancy of the Diſeaſe, he has been robbed of the Staff and Support of his Life, the Joy and Comfort of his declining Age.

Did I know a Wretch among the Practitioners of Medicine, whoſe inſenſible Soul neither feels for the Diſtreſſes he may Occaſion, nor partakes in the Joys he may give riſe to; I ſay, did I know a Man ſo void of every Sentiment of Tenderneſs, and Humanity; I would adviſe him, from Motives of Intereſt and Gain, to endeavour at the Attainment of Skill in his Profeſſion. But to you, Gentlemen, I will point out the Gratification inſeparable from the Acquiſition of Knowledge, that ever to be wiſhed

wiſhed for Praiſe, which falls from the Lips of the Wiſe and the Virtuous, the Applauſe of an approving Conſcience, and the unſpeakable Pleaſure of doing good, as the Reward of all your Toil, and as the ſtrongeſt Spur to your future Induſtry.

As to thoſe who have neither Emulation nor Honeſty, who neither have Abilities, nor will give themſelves the Trouble of acquiring them; I would recommend it to ſuch, ſeriouſly to conſider the Sixth Commandment,

'THOU SHALT DO NO MURDER.'

In the Proſecution of your Studies, let ſuch Authors as have tranſmitted to us Obſervations founded upon Nature, claim your particular Attention. Of theſe, HIPPOCRATES ſhines the foremoſt; his unwearied Diligence in obſerving and collecting the Symptoms of Diſeaſes, his Fidelity and Accuracy in relating them, his happy Facility in diſcovering their Cauſes, his almoſt prophetic Knowledge of their Events, and his ſucceſsful Treatment of them, can never be ſufficiently admired, and will hand down his Name, with Honor and Applauſe to the lateſt Poſterity. A few

A few others among the Ancients, who have followed the Steps of Hippocrates, are well worth your Peruſal; but whilſt you acknowledge *their* Merit. do not affect the Pedantry of deſpiſing the Moderns; and carefully avoid that Rock, upon which moſt of the fond Admirers of Antiquity have ſplit, a blind and ſlaviſh Attachment to its Opinions; the Bar where Truth has been ſo often Shipwrecked, and which more than the want of Ingenuity or Capacity, ſtopped the Progreſs of Learning for above twelve hundred Years.

Why ſhould we give more to thoſe Times, than they attributed to themſelves? Read the Writings of the wiſeſt among the Ancients, and they are filled with Modeſty and Diffidence, why then ſhould we aſcribe to them, Infallibility and Omniſcience? They doubted the Aſſertions, and controverted the Opinions of the Times which preceded them; why ſhould not we doubt and controvert theirs; and leave to Poſterity the Liberty of controverting ours? Let us then examine their Writings with Candour, but with Freedom, and embrace or reject

reject their Opinions; as they ſhall be found conſiſtent, or inconſiſtent with later Experience.

Without therefore depreciating the Merit of the Ancients, let us do Juſtice to their Poſterity, and do not from an over Zeal for Antiquity, ſacrifice Sydenham and Boerhaave, to the Manes of Hippocrates and Galen.---I ſee no Reaſon why Time only ſhould leſſen our Abilities, and ſurely Experience muſt increaſe our Knowledge: and although I think ſome of the Ancients may be read with great Advantage; yet it is the moſt celebrated Moderns (who with equal Abilities enjoy the additional Advantage of near 2000 Years of Experience) whom I would recommend to your moſt attentive Peruſal; particularly thoſe great Ornaments of their Profeſſion, SYDENHAM, BOERHAAVE, HUXHAM, PRINGLE, and WHYTT; and ſome others of our lateſt Engliſh and Scotch Phyſicians, "*Horum Scripta nocturna verſate manu, verſate diurna.*"

In your Intercourſe with your Fellow Practitioners, let Integrity, Candour, and Delicacy be

be your Guides. There is a particular Senſibility of Diſpoſition, which ſeems eſſential to delicate Honor, and which I believe is the beſt Counterpoiſe to Self-Intereſt. This I would by all Means adviſe you to cultivate, as you will meet with many Occaſions where it only can direct your Conduct.

Never affect to deſpiſe a Man for the want of a regular Education, and treat even harmleſs Ignorance, with Delicacy and Compaſſion, but when you meet with it joined with foolhardineſs and Preſumption, you muſt give it no quarter.

On no Pretence whatever, practice thoſe little Arts of Cunning and Diſſimulation, which to the Scandal of the Profeſſion, have been but too frequent amongſt us. Nor ever attempt to raiſe your Fame on the Ruins of another's Reputation; and remember that you ought not only to be cautious of your Words, a Shrug or a Whiſper, the ſtare of Surpriſe, or a piteous Exclamation of Sorrow, more effectually wound another's Reputation, and more clearly betray the Baſeneſs of a Man's own Heart, than the loudeſt Expreſſions.

Do not pretend to Secrets, Panacea's, and Noſtrums, they are illiberal, diſhoneſt, and inconſiſtent with your Characters, as Gentlemen and Phyſicians, and with your Duty as Men--- For if you are poſſeſſed of any valuable Remedy, it is undoubtedly your Duty to divulge it, that as many as poſſible may reap the Benefit of it; and if not, (which is generally the Caſe) you are propagating a Falſehood, and impoſing upon Mankind.

In your Behaviour to the Sick, remember always that your Patient is the Object of the tendereſt Affection, to ſome one, or perhaps to many about him; it is therefore your Duty, not only to endeavour to preſerve his Life, but to avoid wounding the Senſibility of a tender Parent, a diſtreſſed Wife, or an affectionate Child. Let your Carriage be humane and attentive, be intereſted in his Welfare, and ſhew your Apprehenſion of his Danger, rather by your Aſſiduity to relieve, than by any harſh or brutal Expreſſions of it. On the other hand, never buoy up a dying Man with groundleſs Expectations of Recovery, this is at beſt a good natured and humane Deception, but too often

it

it ariſes from the baſer Motives of Lucre and Avarice: beſides, it is really cruel, as the ſtroke of Death is always moſt ſeverely felt, when unexpected; and the grim Tyrant may in general be diſarmed of his Terrors, and rendered familiar to the moſt timid, and apprehenſive; either by frequent Meditation, by the Arguments of Philoſophy, or by the Hopes and Promiſes of Religion. But even overlooking the important Concerns of Futurity; the Buſineſs of this Life may render ſuch a Conduct highly dangerous and criminal; as thoſe to whom the thoughts of Death are painful, are too apt when flattered with the Proſpect of Recovery, to neglect the neceſſary Proviſion againſt a Diſappointment, and by that Means involve their Families in Confuſion and Diſtreſs.

Above all Things, avoid any ridiculous Expreſſions of Humour, at the bed-ſide of a ſick Man; you cannot chuſe a more unſeaſonable Opportunity for your Mirth; nor will you find a Perſon of a generous and benevolent Diſpoſition, who can ſmile even at the Repetition of a Witticiſm,

Witticiſm, which carries with it the Appearance of ſo much Inhumanity.

Let your Preſcriptions be ſimple, and as neat and agreeable as the Nature of the Remedy will permit---Nothing can be more abſurd than the Farrago of ſome, nothing more diſguſtful than the Slovenlineſs of others; for it is impoſſible to learn the true Virtues of Medicines, from compound Preſcriptions; and Inelegance frequently diſappoints us of their Effects.---And as it is probable, from the Mode of Practice in this Country, that you will not only be the Preſcribers, but likewiſe the Diſpenſers of your Medicines, let your Integrity be proof againſt the Temptation of unneceſſarily multiplying Preſcriptions, and truſt rather to the Liberality of your Patient, than to the Quantity of your Phyſic, for your Reward. For altho' perhaps by this Method you may ſometimes think your Services undervalued, yet you will always enjoy the ſuperior Satisfaction of conſcious Rectitude, which, by an honeſt Man, will ever be preferred to a trifling Emolument.---

In

In the Infancy of this Country, the preſent Mode of practiſing Medicine was neceſſarily introduced, from the Scarcity, both of Inhabitants and Phyſicians. But in ſo populous a City as this, it is beyond a Doubt, that the Regulations it is now under, are both injurious to the Inhabitants, and diſhonorable to the Profeſſion: yet I confeſs it is not very eaſy to point out a Remedy to the Inconveniences attendant on it. There is but one, and that perhaps at preſent would not be thought expedient; but until it is, thoſe who are in good Circumſtances muſt rely wholly upon the Integrity of their Phyſicians; and for the Poor who are the greateſt ſufferers, we muſt endeavour to find out ſome other Source of Relief.

Whenever you ſhall be ſo unhappy as to fail, in your Endeavours to relieve; let it be your conſtant Aim to convert, particular Misfortunes into general Bleſſings, by carefully inſpecting the Bodies of the Dead, inquiring into the Cauſes of their Diſeaſes, and thence im-

improving your own Knowledge, and making further and uſeful Diſcoveries in the healing Art.

Nor can I help regretting the many Obſtacles you will meet with in proſecuting this ſo neceſſary an Enquiry; from the Prejudices of the People in general, and a falſe Tenderneſs and miſtaken Delicacy in Relations. Time and Perſeverance however muſt overcome popular Prejudices, and will I hope before long, remove theſe Difficulties, and open this Door to Medical Improvement.

Let thoſe who are at once the unhappy Victims, both of Poverty and Diſeaſe, claim your particular Attention; I cannot repreſent to myſelf a more real Object of Charity, than a poor Man with perhaps a helpleſs Family, labouring under the complicated Miſeries of Sickneſs and Penury. Paint to yourſelves the agonizing feelings of a Parent, whilſt labouring under ſome painful Diſeaſe, he beholds a helpleſs Offspring around his Bed, in want of the neceſſaries of Nature; imagine the Deſpair of an affectionate Wife, and a tender Mother.

Mother, who can neither relieve the Pain and Anxiety of her Huſband, nor ſupply the importunate cravings of her Children; and *then* deny them your Aſſiſtance if you can---but the Suppoſition is injurious to Humanity, and *you* in particular, I know want no ſuch Incitements to Duty and Benevolence. I cannot however help regretting, the very frequent Opportunities you will meet with, particularly in this Place, of exerciſing your Humanity upon ſuch Occaſions; owing to the want of a proper Aſylum, for ſuch unhappy and real Objects of Charity, it is truly a reproach, that a City like this, ſhould want a public Hoſpital, one of the moſt uſeful and neceſſary charitable Inſtitutions that can poſſibly be imagined.

The labouring Poor are allowed to be the ſupport of the Community; their Induſtry enables the Rich to live in Eaſe and Affluence, and it is from the Hands of the Manufacturer we derive, not only the Neceſſaries, but the Superfluities of Life; whilſt the poor Pittance he earns will barely ſupply the Neceſſities of Nature, and it is literally by the ſweat of his Brow, that he gains his daily Subſiſtance; how heavy

heavy a Calamity muſt Sickneſs be to ſuch a Man, which putting it out of his Power to work, immediately deprives him and perhaps a helpleſs Family of Bread!

Nor would the good Effects of an Hoſpital be wholly confined to the Poor, they would extend to every Rank, and greatly contribute to the Safety and Welfare of the whole Community. Every Country has its particular Diſeaſes; the Varieties of Climate, Expoſure, Soil, Situation, Trades, Arts, Manufactures, and even the Character of a People, all pave the Way to new Complaints, and vary the Appearance of thoſe, with which we are already acquainted; Hence Ægypt is ſubject to the Plague; Holland to Intermittents; the Weſt-Indies to Putrid; and the Northern Countries to inflammatory Diſeaſes; and Spain and England to Hypochondriacal Complaints; which reigning Diſeaſes of a Country, not only have Peculiarities of their own, but often vary the Characters of ſuch as are common to that Country with others, and theſe Peculiarities with their Antidotes can properly

be learned only in public Hoſpitals, where having a number of Sick at one Time, not only affords an Opportuhity of the better comparing and remarking their Symptoms, but they being under a certain Diſcipline and Regulation, the Faces of their diſeaſes are not changed, either by the indulgence of friends or the officiouſneſs of Nurſes; which is too often the caſe in private practice. Another argument, (and that by no means the leaſt,) for an Inſtitution of this Nature, is, that it affords the beſt and only means of properly inſtructing Pupils in the Practice of Medicine; as far therefore, as the breeding good and able Phyſicians, which in all Countries and at all Times has been thought an object of the higheſt Importance, deſerves the Conſideration of the Public, this Inſtitution muſt likewiſe claim its Protection and Encouragement.

Nor is the Scheme of a Public Hoſpital I believe ſo impracticable, nor the Execution of it, I hope at ſo great a diſtance, as at firſt ſight it may appear to be. There are Numbers in this Place I am ſure (was a Subſcription once ſet on foot,

upon

upon an extenſive and generous Plan) whoſe Fortunes enable them, and whoſe Benevolence would prompt them, liberally to contribute to ſo uſeful an Inſtitution; it wants but a Prime Mover, whoſe Authority would give Weight to the Undertaking, and whoſe Zeal and Induſtry, would promote it. Such a one I hope ere long to ſee riſe up amongſt us, and may the Bleſſing of the Poor, and the Applauſe of the Good and Humane, be the Reward of his Aſſiduity and Labour.

FINIS.

DISCOURSE

ON

MEDICAL EDUCATION

DELIVERED AT THE

MEDICAL COMMENCEMENT

OF

THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS

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BY SAMUEL BARD, M. D. LL. D.

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DISCOURSE

ON

MEDICAL EDUCATION.

GENTLEMEN,

A sound mind, in a sound body, constitutes the principal happiness and perfection of man; the means, therefore, by which such great and essential benefits are to be secured, have ever been the object of his solicitude, and most anxious inquiry. Bountiful nature has placed both, to a certain degree, within our reach; but she has not offered them gratuitously to our acceptance; and if we would enjoy, we must consent to purchase them, at the price which she has invariably set upon these, and all other blessings, she pours so profusely around us. That price, (young gentlemen, I address myself particularly to you,) that price is *persevering industry, and*

well-directed labour ; without which, nothing great or excellent was ever attained; but when properly aided by these, it is not easy to set limits to the powers of man, or to say, what he may not atchieve. Nor is this universal law of our nature more applicable to the health of the body than it is to the improvement of the mind ; every exercise of which "upon the theorems of science, (says the admirable author of Hermes,) tends to call forth and strengthen our native and original vigour. Be the subject immediately productive or not, the nerves of reason are braced by mere employ, and we become better actors in the drama of life, whether our parts be of the sedate or the active kind."

Man, in every state of society, is obliged to acknowledge this truth. It is only in the ends he has in view, in the variety of things which he deems good and useful, that the untutored savage differs from the civilized man—that the ignorant and the vicious differ from the wise and the good. The means by which the objects of their pursuit are acquired, are the same in both. "It is as

easy to become a scholar, as it is to become a gamester, or any other character equally low and illiberal: the same application, the same quantity of habit, will fit us for the one, as completely as for the other."* Indeed, we are, in a peculiar degree, the creatures of habit, and it is as easy to establish good and useful, as it is to establish evil and pernicious, habits. Hence the great value and importance of education; that such talents and faculties as God and nature have given us, may not only be called forth, but restricted within proper limits, and directed to their proper objects: to private happiness, and to the public good. Otherwise, like seed committed to a fertile soil, but not enlivened by a genial sun, they may lie buried and inactive forever; or if not restrained by due culture, they will shoot out into wild and luxuriant branches, which will never produce good and wholesome fruit. For man is an active and a restless being; nothing becomes so insupportable to him as continued inaction; if he is not doing good, he will probably be engaged in evil; he will

*Harris.

do mischief rather than do nothing. Even the savage, to whom rest is the most dignified, as well as the most grateful, enjoyment, continually has recourse to the laborious toils of the chase, or to the fatiguing dangers of war, to relieve himself from the irksome feelings of protracted quiet; thus, too, in civilized life, all the envied qualities of great genius and brilliant talents are ever at work on good or evil. When unimproved by study, and unrestrained by discipline, they too frequently, like a wandering and a blazing meteor, burn and destroy every thing they approach; but when restricted in their course by proper principles, and directed by wisdom and virtue, they warm, and cherish, and illuminate, like the blessed sun. It is, therefore, in the constitution of our frame, and in the nature and structure of our minds, that we discover the reason and truth of the maxim, that the happiness of private life, the peace of society, and the stability of government, especially of all free governments, depends upon the instruction, information, and correct habits, of the people. To give these their proper direction,

and to establish them firmly, we must begin with early youth; we must lay the foundation of all professional excellence, correct morals, and pure religion, as well as of good government, in our common schools. From whence, otherwise, shall offices be filled with ability; where shall we find just magistrates, and able teachers of religion and virtue; where the protectors of our rights and our property; where the preservers of our health and our lives; where, in short, good citizens, if we neglect to instruct our youth, and leave them to grope their devious way without a guide through the labyrinth of this mazy world?

But general observations on the necessity and advantage of education, cannot be very necessary before this audience; let us, therefore, turn our attention to that branch of learning, to which this College is particularly devoted, and after considering the necessary preparation, endeavour to explain the nature of such institutions and discipline as experience has proved to be useful and requisite in the education of an accomplished physician and surgeon.

It has of late been made a question, sanctioned by some great names, particularly in this country, how far the study of the Greek and Latin languages is necessary, or even useful, in either of the learned professions, excepting that of Divinity. But yielding, for the present, the argument for their absolute necessity, I believe it may be said with great truth, that there is no study or discipline, in which a boy, who is intended for any liberal profession, not excepting merchandise, which is the most general—or who may take a part in the government of his country, to which, with us, all may aspire—can, from the age of eight years to that of sixteen or eighteen, be employed, so generally and truly useful, as classical learning. The study of grammar, and the application of its rules, as practised in a good school, form, perhaps, the very best exercise that can be invented, to rouse the ambition, to quicken the apprehension, to ripen the judgment, and to establish a habit of close and diligent application, the first and the greatest lesson of life. And the youth who can read Homer and Virgil, Plato and Cicero, without imbibing some

of their noble and generous sentiments, without having his judgment strengthened, his taste refined, and his heart mended, must be strangely deficient in all good feeling, or in any improvable faculty of mind. The elements, therefore, of classical learning may justly be considered, and have been proved by long experience, to be the best preparation for any employment above those of the mechanic arts; and before it is time to begin the study of either of the learned professions, or to enter a counting house, a young man may easily acquire these, together with a correct knowledge of his own language, and so much mathematical learning as is necessary and useful in the ordinary business of life. As to the modern languages, their great utility in the commerce of the world cannot be denied: but in forming the character, an object of far greater consequence. they certainly fall very far below the ancient languages; nor can any person, who will consider how much the knowledge of one language facilitates the acquisition of another, and how much more the knowledge of two facilitates that of

a third, think, even in this respect, the time lost, which is spent in acquiring the Latin, the root and origin of the Italian, Spanish, and French, languages.

But farther; languages are the repositories of science; losing a language, therefore, is like the destruction of an immense library, which cannot be replaced. If the originals are neglected purposely, the copies may be accidentally lost, by the ravages of a barbarous foe, or the lapse of time, and thus by neglecting a language, one means of perpetuating knowledge, so far as that language is concerned, is certainly lost. Besides, though science may be translated, taste and talent cannot. The spirit of original composition is too volatile to be transfused; to catch it, we must ascend to the fountain head.

Although, therefore, we acknowledge that every thing really necessary in the theory and practice of medicine, may be learned from the excellent authors who have written originally in English; and that all the best works of other languages are to be had correctly translated into our own, still,

as it is not very becoming for a professional man to be totally ignorant of those languages in which all the ancient records of his art are preserved, and from which all the technical terms of which he is in the daily use are derived; it is hoped that classical learning will again assume its place, if not as absolutely necessary, at least as very useful, and highly ornamental, in the character of a physician.

The great error in our system of education is, that we are too much in a hurry, and that our young men are ushered into the world, and commence the practice of their professions, at a period so early, and after a preparation so slight, that very few have acquired the prudence or the knowledge requisite to govern their conduct in either; and hence arise the errors and failure of too many, and our general, and I am afraid I may say, too just, reputation for superficial attainments. Could we keep our youth at school until sixteen, at college until twenty, and in a counting house, or at the study of the professions, until twenty-four or twenty-five years of age, they would be more

generally successful in life; we should have fewer failures in trade, and more respectability and eminence in our professional men. Am I asked how it happens that in our own profession the general practice is so widely different? I can only answer, it is a state which we rather submit to than approve; that for the present we must palliate a disease we cannot immediately cure; that such is the condition of medicine throughout this widely extended, and thinly inhabited country, that very few of its practitioners can be compensated for an expensive education; and that the interest of the people, as well as the utility of the profession, are better promoted by sending abroad a considerable number of young men, decently, but competently initiated in the principles of their art, than only a few of higher qualifications. But this state of things is rapidly changing--perhaps has hitherto been unavoidable; and a just apology for it may be found in the infancy of our country, and its recent emancipation from a state of thraldom and dependence.

I rejoice, therefore, to see, and congratulate my

fellow-citizens on, the change. Many able advocates for the good old discipline have lately risen up among us, and a great and manifest improvement, in this respect, has already been made, and is rapidly progressing, in our schools and colleges.

A classical education is a fine preparation for acting in society with complacence, propriety, and dignity; for sound learning, and correct taste, are nearly connected with pure morals: independent of all principle, they undoubtedly give a delicacy and sensibility to the mind, very favourable to virtue; and whilst they are, in themselves, a prominent source of happiness to the individual, and place him above the necessity of seeking it from sources less pure, they, at the same time, become the means of diffusing happiness around him. "A wise and able magistrate, a learned professor of the law, a humane and benevolent physician, no less than an enlightened teacher of religion, contribute to the happiness of posterity, as well as that of the age in which they live: by their knowledge, they mitigate the evils of their cotemporaries; by their example, they mend the characters

of those with whom they associate; and, by their precepts, they sow the seeds of excellence which may bless and exalt their country to future generations."

Medicine is a comprehensive and an intricate science, founded on numberless facts which have been discovered through the successive periods of distant ages, and which have been collected and preserved in the writings of almost innumerable authors, of different nations and tongues. It has necessarily been coloured and disfigured by the credulity of some; rejected, lost, and again revived, by the cautious discrimination of others; elucidated by new discoveries, and confirmed by later experience. Among ignorant and barbarous nations, this science has ever been connected with religion, involved in mystery, and disfigured by superstition. As men advanced from barbarism, it assumed a more rational form, and, resting on the solid basis of experience, under the polished Greeks, directed by the genius of Hippocrates, acquired beauty, symmetry, and strength: until, as the refinements of a speculative philoso-

phy began to prevail, theoretic opinions were substituted for fact and experiment; the subtlety of the schools, and the wanderings of the imagination, for sound reasoning and chaste deduction. By these errors, the progress of medical science, though not absolutely arrested, was greatly checked; until, through the important discovery of the circulation of the blood, by Harvey, and the introduction of a strict philosophy, by Bacon, in which opinion was made to give place to observation, and a patient investigation of facts was substituted for the quibbles of sophistry, the science of medicine became again placed on its proper basis—nature, observation, and experience. From this moment, anatomy, chemistry, natural history, and natural philosophy, which, although they had long been in the train of medicine, had rather followed, than directed her researches, were impressed into her service, and made to take the lead in a medical education; nor until he has made considerable progress in these, can the student of medicine be properly qualified even to begin what is the great object of his pursuit, the study of diseases, and their cure.

In a profession so various, so intricate, and so expensive, it is easy to see that the scholar can make but little progress by private study. Lost and bewildered in the multiplicity of objects, and in the contrariety of conflicting opinions, he absolutely requires the hand of a master to lead him into the plainest and most direct path; to remove, as he goes along, the obstacles which may obstruct his progress; and to point out such as are most worthy his observation. Nor are there many individuals who are qualified to teach all the preliminary branches; each of them is sufficiently extensive to employ the time, and occupy the attention, of a man of no common attainments.

Besides, chemistry requires a laboratory; botany a garden; and anatomy a theatre and subjects; and, above all, the nature of diseases, and the practice of medicine, cannot be taught but in a public hospital. Much, therefore, as oral instruction, and the voice of a professor, are to be preferred to the silent investigations of the closet, still more is required: the co-operation of several teachers, and the facilities of a public institution

and thus, too, in a large city, where only, in this country at least, anatomy and the practice of medicine can be properly taught. In both these branches, the student must not only receive the instructions of his teacher—he must not only reflect on and digest what he hears and reads, but he must see, and handle, and examine, for himself. In anatomy, the subject, properly prepared, must be placed before him; without this, the most accurate description, even when aided by the finest plates and drawings, will be found wholly inadequate to convey correct ideas, or to make durable impressions on his mind. The parts must be unfolded by the knife; they must be distended by injections; and whatever is uninteresting, and obscures their intimate structure, must be removed; or the student will look with a vacant eye, upon what, to him at least, will appear an unformed mass: and if possible, after having been taught what he is to look for, and what is most worthy his observation, he should handle the knife and the syringe for himself—he should learn

how to prepare the subject for the instruction of others.

In chemistry, the science of nature, by which we are admitted into her confidence, are taught her secrets, and learn her processes, but slow progress can be made without a teacher, aided, too, by a large and expensive apparatus; for although by the introduction of a more correct language, and a more liberal philosophy, all the jargon and mystery in which the old chemists clothed their communications, and concealed their art, have been done away; still, the multiplicity of facts, the delicacy of processes, and the variety of apparatus, are such, that practice only can give that dexterity which is necessary to ensure success; and to acquire this dexterity unassisted, would require more time, and be accompanied by greater expense, than most students of medicine could well afford.

In botany and natural history, the number of objects to be examined, and with which it is necessary to become acquainted, is so great, that without a garden and a museum, without ar-

rangement and system, no correct or valuable knowledge can be acquired.

And, lastly, in the study of diseases, and in the practice of medicine, no histories, however accurate—no reasoning, however just—can convey the knowledge necessary for their treatment and cure. The student must see, and hear, and feel for himself. The hue of the complexion the feel of the skin, the lustre or languor of the eye, the throbbing of the pulse and the palpitations of the heart, the quickness and ease of respiration, and the tone and tremor of the voice, the confidence of hope, and the despondence of fear, as they are expressed in the countenance, baffle all description; and yet all and each of these convey important and necessary information. Where can these be learned but at the bedsides of the sick? and where shall a young man, who cannot be admitted into the privacies of families, or the chambers of women, acquire this necessary information, but in a public hospital, which is not only intended as an asylum to relieve the complicated misery of poverty and sickness, but as a

school of medicine, to contribute to the public welfare; and, as such, deserves and receives the patronage of government, even more than as a mere charitable institution.

But beside these considerations, and the impossibility of teaching medicine in private, there are many advantages which attend public institutions in this, as well as most other sciences: one is, that from the division of the subject, a more enlarged, comprehensive, and systematic view of the whole will be taken; its connection with, and dependence on, other branches of learning, will be more clearly pointed out; and general laws and fundamental principles will be better taught.

The student learns what are the proper objects of his inquiry at each stage, and, as he goes along, is taught how to make a proper use of his previous acquirements and experience.

Besides, young men engaged in the same studies, mutually assist each other; emulation, which warms and engages the passions on the side of whatever is excellent, cannot be excited without rivals; without emulation in the scholar,

instruction will proceed but with a languid pace, and excellence is never attained. Nor is emulation confined to the scholar. The emoluments of the teacher depend on his fame, and both on his talents and industry. Stimulated, therefore, by his interest, and spurred on by his ambition, he will make every exertion to recommend his lectures which he knows are to be brought to the ordeal of a nice and critical examination. Among his hearers, there will always be a number of the elder students, very able to judge of his merits, and very willing to discover his errors. Such a system of education cannot long be conducted in a slovenly or incompetent manner; negligence will sit very uneasily ~~in it~~, and incompetence cannot long keep her seat in a professor's chair.

Nor is it by exciting their emulation only, that young men, assembled in a public school, are of use to each other; they mutually instruct one another, by their daily conversation, and in societies formed for the purpose of discussing professional opinions, on which they often exercise a

degree of attention and acuteness which serves as no inadequate test of their truth and usefulness; and this farther serves to explain them to their understandings, and fix them in their memories, with more clearness and precision than hearing them many times repeated from their professors.

Indolence is the greatest enemy to learning; but indolence is a vice bred and nourished in solitude, and can hardly exist at a public school, but in minds of so heavy a mould as to be incapable of culture. But dissipation is the error into which a young man of lively disposition and quick parts, especially on first coming from the retirement of the country into a large and luxuriant city, is most apt to fall; and unless he possess some strength of mind, the variety of new scenes, the novelty of surrounding objects, and the allurements of pleasure, too frequently seize upon his imagination, occupy his thoughts, waste his time and his resources, blast his own prospects, and disappoint the hopes and expectations of his friends. Against this I have nothing

to urge but the common, though strong and irresistible, argument of duty and necessity; nor any remedy to propose, but that of wholesome employment. It is at the commencement of your career that you will be in the greatest danger; if you postpone your indulgence for a short time, even for a few weeks, until you are fairly engaged in your studies, full occupation will at least lessen the temptation; and when once you see how absolutely incompatible dissipation and pleasure are with duty and improvement, you will probably find yourselves able to resist their attractions, or, I should rather hope, they will have no attractions for you.

On the other hand, to continue in retirement, and there to labour without plan or design, may indeed accumulate a confused mass of materials; but beauty, order, and proportion, are the result of skill: he that would build a palace, must employ an architect. So the student of medicine, who trusts to his own unassisted researches, or who is directed by an inadequate guide, may load his memory and confound his judgment, by a

great number of facts, and a medley of opinions, which will only lead him into error, and end at last in darkness and confusion. But he who is properly initiated into the rudiments of his art, pursues his improvement in the light of day; every step he takes, brings him nearer to his purposed end; every fact and opinion he learns, takes its proper place; and knowledge—clear, precise, and accurate knowledge, is the happy result.

In no profession are sound learning, clear and definite opinions, and correct conduct, of more consequence, than in that of medicine; in the exercise of which, our dearest interests, our health and lives, and the health and lives of our parents, wives, children, and friends, are deeply and essentially concerned. For let it be remembered, that there is no middle course in medicine: it is a mistake, to suppose the conduct of a physician is ever of that neutral and inconsequential nature, that although it do no good, it will do but little harm. If, through ignorance, a physician does not do good, he will

probably do much injury; for our opportunities of acting are so fleeting, that they must be seized at the moment; and to lose time is, frequently, to do all we can to render the case under our care desperate or fatal. Nor, on the contrary, is there any profession, in which that cautious diffidence, which is the result of deep knowledge, is of greater consequence, than in that of the physician. In our profession, to know when to act with vigour, when to palliate symptoms, or to look on with patience, and from what circumstances to draw our indications, is the result only of a thorough knowledge of our subject; nor in any profession is that meddling presumption, which is ever the companion, and most frequently the veil of ignorance, more dangerous.

Nor are the happy consequences of a good education, in medicine, confined to the chambers of the sick; a physician must always, in some measure, become the companion, and frequently the intimate friend, of his patient; he must often share his confidence, and, on some occasions, become the depositary of his secrets. His prin-

ciples, therefore, his knowledge, and his example, become extensively useful or prejudicial. Is he learned, and wise, and good?—his learning will instruct, his skill and his humanity will bless, and his advice and example may amend many among those with whom he daily converses. Is he ignorant, and loose, and debauched?—what mischief may he not do to the younger members of those families who place their confidence in him, and who generally look up to him as a character of superior talent, learning, and worth. Again; the medical character is not only very influential—it is also the most numerous, among the learned professions: the example, therefore, of a physician's knowledge and virtues, or the contamination of his ignorance and his vices, will assume a wider and more extended range.

Is it possible, then, that greater inducements can be offered to a young man, to stimulate his most strenuous exertions, and to call forth all the force of his understanding, and every generous feeling of his heart, than are to be found in the

nature, the extent and the influence of our profession. Occupied on the most important subjects, the ease, the comfort, the happiness, and the lives, of our fellow creatures, it imperiously calls for knowledge and ability. Extensive, beyond the limits of any other science, in the variety of its objects, the continually changing nature of its subjects, and the endless progressive march of its improvements, it is impossible either to acquire what is now known, or to keep pace with its daily accessions of knowledge, but by a zeal and industry as steady and persevering as time itself. Extended over the face of the whole earth, and at the same time penetrating into the recesses of every private family, unless our knowledge be accompanied by prudence, virtue, and religion, we may do more harm by our example, than we can do good by our skill.

Let me then hope, that every young man who now hears me, will lay these important truths seriously to heart: that he will study his profession, not only from motives of ambition and interest, but with a view to the better fulfilment of

his moral and religious duties. That he will conscientiously consider the reponsibility of his station, and the influence of his example, and that, whilst he faithfully and respectably fulfils his duty to his patients, by his talents, learning, and industry, he will support the dignity of his own character, by the correctness of his conduct, and recommend his example, by the purity of his manners:—And may peace, reputation, and fortune, be his well-earned reward.

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